

ROYAL GORGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Location. The Royal Gorge Specific Plan ("Plan") proposes to establish the guiding land development principals and standards for approximately 2,600 acres owned or controlled by Royal Gorge LLC within Placer County ("Plan Area"). Figure 1.1.1 shows the Plan Area location within the Donner Summit area of eastern Placer County region, just south of Soda Springs, California. The Plan Area is accessed by the Interstate 80/Donner Pass Road interchange, Soda Springs Road and Donner Pass Road. Figure 1.1.2 indicates the setting of the Plan Area location in the Donner Summit vicinity. Some transportation system improvements related to the implementation of the Plan will be located on parcels in Nevada County, immediately north of the Plan Area ("off site lands"), shown on Figure 1.1.2 and designated the "east off site lands" and "west off site lands". Other planned improvements may, as alternatives in the Plan, be located on the off site lands.

1.2 Project Setting. The following improvements are already located on the site: Royal Gorge cross country ski trails and facilities; and Ice Lakes Lodge, a 26-room lodge and restaurant on the southeast shore of Serene Lakes. The balance of the Plan Area and the off site lands are presently undeveloped.

a) Surrounding Land Uses. The Plan Area is adjacent to Sugar Bowl Ski Resort to its east and Soda Springs Ski Resort to its north, and surrounds the existing Serene Lakes residential subdivisions. On the west and south it is adjacent to lands of the United States, administered by the Tahoe National Forest of the U.S. Forest Service. A small number of summer vacation residences exist on privately owned parcels to the west of the Plan Area. There is a mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses in Nevada County to the north of the Plan Area, adjacent to both the Plan Area and the west off site lands.

b) Current General Plan Designations. The 1994 Placer County General Plan Land Use Diagram includes land use designations for the Plan Area. Land Use designations applicable to the site include High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, General Commercial, Recreation, Agricultural/Timberland, Open Space and Water. The Generalized Land Use Diagram within the General Plan currently designates much of the site "Urban" and the balance, "Timberland" and "Open Space".

c) Current Zoning. The current Placer County zoning for the Plan Area is a mix of Residential Single Family, Residential Single Family-Planned Development, Residential Single Family-Building Site, Residential, Multi-Family, Residential Forest-Development Reserve, Forest-Development Reserve, Forest-Building Site, Neighborhood Commercial-Design Sierra, Resort-Design Sierra, Heavy Commercial- Design Sierra, Open Space and Water Influence use areas.

1.3 Plan Area Environmental Characteristics. Plan Area topography is varied from gently sloping to mountainous, ranging in elevation from 6,100 feet to 7,600 feet. The Plan Area

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generally contains moderately steep slopes and broad to narrow valleys. It is underlain by exposed granite rock, tertiary age volcanic rock and glacial deposits.

A portion of Lake Van Norden and all of Serene Lakes are within the Plan Area. Serena Creek drains in a southerly direction from Serene Lakes. Several small springs and seeps exist within the Plan Area.

The Plan Area contains three primary biological communities: Montane Forest (the majority of the area), Montane Meadow (generally limited to the Van Norden Meadow) and Open Water. Wildlife on the site includes a variety of birds and mammals such as mule deer, coyote and black bear.

The off site lands generally contain the same environmental characteristics as the Plan Area. The east off site lands include a portion of Van Norden Meadow and Lake, and a short section of the South Yuba River where it begins at the outlet of Lake Van Norden. The west off site lands are forested.

1.4 Existing Infrastructure. The Plan Area includes much of Soda Springs Road, which connects to Donner Pass Road over an at-grade crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at a point north of the Plan Area. Pahastsi Road and several unpaved roads and trails are within the Plan Area. A large electrical power line and easement traverses the Plan Area from east to west.

1.5 Existing Land Use Plans, Policies and Regulations. The Plan Area is subject to the 1994 Placer County General Plan, the Placer County Zoning Ordinance and other Placer County ordinances. The off site lands are subject to the Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. There is no community plan or other applicable local land use plan.

1.6 Project Purpose and Objectives. The overarching goal of the Plan is to create a multidimensional Sierra conservation community, incorporating sustainable development concepts and connecting visitors and residents to the Sierra alpine environment throughout the year. The Plan Area will be developed as a cohesive collection of "camps," linked by a comprehensive trail, recreation and amenity concept. If approved, the Plan would define the land use designations within the boundaries of the Plan Area and would be the primary land use policy and regulatory document used to guide development within that area.

The Plan provides for a diverse range of housing options to promote a varied, multi-dimensional community. This includes a range of single family residential lots and rustic cabins as well as multi-family options such as townhomes, multi-family homes with whole and shared ownership condominium units, and workforce/employee housing apartments. Architectural themes are intended to create buildings that blend into the environment so that the landscape continues to dominate.

The Plan builds upon existing Donner Summit residential, recreational and environmental communities by improving connections to existing uses and adding new facilities for community use. The scale and character of proposed development will link to and build upon the existing residential neighborhood (Serene Lakes), commercial area (Donner Pass Road) and recreational nodes (such as Royal Gorge, Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, Soda Springs Ski Resort and National

Forest trails). To further a "sense of community" and neighborhood interaction, homes will be linked by a network of multi-use trails, trailheads, small gathering places, and neighborhood "camp centers."

1.7 Project Features

a) Overview. The project includes the adoption of the Plan and implementing Development Standards and Design Guidelines. Infrastructure planning documents related to traffic, parking, wastewater, water, utilities, drainage and stormwater will be prepared to support the Plan. The Plan envisions phased development of a destination community defined by its integration with the alpine environment. The Plan addressed the type, location and intensity of development, including community design infrastructure and Plan implementation programs. All subsequent development and related activities within the Plan Area would be required to be consistent with the Plan. A proposed Land Use Plan is attached as Figure 1.7

b) Residential, Recreation and Other Uses. The Plan proposes a maximum of 950 residential units within the Plan Area, generally clustered in four "camp" areas. It provides for a range of year around and seasonal residential and recreational uses, including zoning for single family residential and multi-family residential development located in the camps, each based on an outdoor recreational/residential combination of uses. Each camp is to include outdoor recreational amenities and uses. Up to a maximum of 20% of the total number of residential units in the Plan Area may be sold on a fractional ownership basis.

i) "Ski Camp" is proposed as approximately 600 units, 500 of which would be medium and high density residential housing and the balance single family residential use. Some of the units may be offered for sale in fractional ownership interests and some of the planned condominium units would be used in a hotel operation. Ski Camp will serve as the core of the community. The Plan allows at Ski Camp up to 20,000 square feet of visitor-serving retail and up to 45,000 square feet of recreation-oriented uses, including a wellness center, skier services, related administrative office uses and a mountain restaurant. Additionally, employee housing units would be located in this area. Up to 9,000 square feet of civic/institutional uses are also proposed for Ski Camp. Acquisition for addition to Ski Camp of one or both of the five acre parcel owned by Placer County and similar sized parcel owned by the Sierra Lakes County Water District, both located on the north side of Ski Camp is an alternative.

Ski Camp would include alpine ski runs and facilities and a ski connection to the neighboring, existing Sugar Bowl ski area. The Plan designates about 80 percent (approximately 710 acres) of Ski Camp as open space, largely for recreational use. Public access to Ski Camp will be controlled to minimize vehicular trips through the Plan Area and Serene Lakes neighborhood. Traffic management and parking regulations and controls that adjust seasonally to respond to the seasonal changes in user demand will be enforced. During the ski season, public parking for alpine day-skiers will not be available at Ski Camp. Plan Area and Serene Lakes residents and their guests, and overnight guests to any lodging or overnight facilities in the Plan Area (including the existing Ice Lakes Lodge) will utilize parking facilities at their respective locations and a shuttle system to access Ski Camp. The Plan also calls for a limited number of trailhead parking spaces within Ski Camp for backcountry users to access the adjacent Tahoe National Forest lands via new public access located in the Plan Area.

ii) **"Lake Camp"** is proposed to include approximately 250 units, including approximately 50 medium density residential and approximately 200 single family residential homes near two lakes to be created in the western portion of the Plan Area. Some of the units may be offered for sale in fractional ownership interests. Certain trails weaving through Lake Camp will be open to the public and will provide a link between Summit Camp and the National Forest lands to the west and south. During the ski season, most of these trails will be maintained as part of the Royal Gorge cross country ski operation and will be used by residents and members of the public with ski passes. Specific trails through the area will also be open to the public during the non-ski season and will offer a mix of hiking, pedestrian, cycling and equestrian uses. The Plan specifies new public trail access in the non-ski season between Palisade Peak and the Serene Lakes neighborhood across Plan Area open space. Natural buffers will be maintained along the trails to preserve the dominance of the natural environment. A generous Recreation Open Space buffer, containing cross country and multi-use trails, is planned between the residential parts of Lake Camp and the adjacent Serene Lakes neighborhood.

Lake Camp contains a number of outdoor recreational uses for the enjoyment of residents primarily centered on the main Camp community recreation center, the Lake House (maximum 12,000 s.f.). During the non-ski season, amenities include a swimming pool, tennis court(s) and a recreational lake. The recreational lake, "West Lake", located at the center of Lake Camp and related to the Lake House, is envisioned for passive, non motorized boating activities, such as kayaking and row boating. "East Lake", located on the eastern edge of Lake Camp, will provide water storage and a visual amenity within Lake Camp and is not planned for recreational uses. Equestrian facilities consisting of a barn, stables and pasture are planned for the western part of Lake Camp. There is an alternative site for these facilities on the west off site lands.

iii) **"Wilderness Camp"**, in the southernmost part of the Plan Area, will contain a private campground, approximately 50 cabins in two clusters and a small lodge ("Lodge"). The cabins may be offered for sale in fractional ownership interests. A new public trail along the existing private road is proposed for access to Pt. Mariah, which is located on USFS land. The Lodge and a warming cabin will enhance the cross country ski opportunities in the area. The Lodge will be accessible in the winter only by ski, snow shoe or over snow vehicles. A lookout tower is planned on the existing road to Pt. Mariah to provide view opportunities and may include a small beverage service facility. Other private trails and camp gathering places will connect the private facilities in this Camp.

iv) **"Summit Camp"** consists of approximately 210 acres around Van Norden Meadow and Lake. Royal Gorge is also owner of the east off site lands, approximately 166 acres of adjacent land in Nevada County. Residential development proposed for Summit Camp includes approximately 50 medium density and single family homes, as well as employee housing. Summit Camp will contain relocated cross country skiing trails and summer hiking and biking trails and support facilities. The existing Royal Gorge cross country ski lodge, known as "Summit Station", and support facilities are planned to be renovated and possibly expanded at or near their present location within Summit Camp. An interpretive center and gathering place for community, outdoor recreation and educational groups is planned to be added to or near Summit Station. Recreational uses in Summit Camp may be connected to existing recreational uses of Royal Gorge lands to the north, in Nevada County. As an alternative to renovation at its present

location, Summit Station may be relocated, and the interpretive center built, on the east off site lands, north of Summit Camp, and operated together with additional parking for recreational uses, including a trail head for public use, and cross country ski and hiking trails would connect to the similar facilities within Summit Camp. The east off site lands contain locations for a public park, which may be added as off site use, a maintenance yard, a private fishing outfitters cabin and pier, and an alternative site for employee housing.

The camps would be connected by a network of trails and roads. Development will maintain and build upon the existing Royal Gorge cross country ski area and provide a new ski connection from development in the southeast portion of the Plan Area to the existing Sugar Bowl downhill ski resort.

Together, proposed Plan Area recreational amenities and improvements include downhill skiing runs, lifts and related facilities; cross country skiing; two private recreation lakes; public pedestrian trails and possibly equestrian trails and related facilities, as well as a camp ground. The Plan Area, or as an alternative, the off site lands, will include an equestrian facility, and renovated cross country ski area day lodge, and may include a fishing outfitters cabin and pier, interpretive center, public park and related parking areas and trails.

The Plan will include an integrated open space plan, incorporating Plan Area open space with uses of surrounding undeveloped publicly and privately owned lands. Plan Area lands will be managed for multi-use trail corridors, ski runs other recreational purposes, habitat preservation, conservation and educational purposes and fuel and forest management practices. The Plan will also include a trails plan designating the locations of all public and private trails.

c) Infrastructure.

i) Roads. The Plan proposes road improvements and new roads, including an off-site grade separated crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks which intercepts Soda Springs Road to the north of the Plan Area. Soda Springs Road, south of the intersection of Donner Pass Road and Soda Springs Road, will serve as the primary access to the Plan Area. That off-site intersection will be upgraded to enhance vehicle access for the overall community and project. Improvement of the existing off site bridge of Soda Springs Road over the South Yuba River is also proposed. All other proposed roadways serving the Plan Area will branch off of Soda Springs Road. The Plan will include specific Mountain Road Design standards proposed to reduce cuts and fills and to provide road solutions that are responsive to the mountain terrain. An alternative realignment of Soda Springs Road is possible south of the UPRR right of way that would include creation of a new road running parallel to Soda Springs Road that would act as the main vehicle access to the Plan Area. Another alternative will be implementation of the proposed project without change to the existing road system. Road access for the quarter section in the northeastern part of the Plan Area, the easternmost part of Ski Camp, will be over an existing trail improved for year round vehicle use, in part over U. S. Forest Service land near the section corner of Sections 25, 26, 35 and 36, under an easement or permit from the USFS. Additionally, as an alternative, a ski transfer lift may be proposed across USFS land immediately north of Ski Camp to assist skiers in moving between the Plan Area and Sugar Bowl Ski Area.

ii) Wastewater. Infrastructure improvements will include one of two wastewater treatment and disposable alternatives. The alternatives are a) collection, conveyance and treatment at an expanded Donner Summit Public Utility District ("DSPUD") waste water treatment plant, or at a new waste water treatment plant; or b) treatment at a new facility and storage of treated effluent during the winter. With the latter alternative, during the allowable spray season, both the stored and newly generated effluent would be treated and disposed of via spray irrigation on property within the Plan Area, allowing for a complete land based disposal of all treated effluent.

iii) Water. A domestic water distribution system and water supply improvements which may include surface water and/or ground water is proposed. Water supply may come from alternative sources. The Plan Area is within the Sierra Lakes County Water District ("SLCWD") service area. If SLCWD serves the Plan Area, then the existing SLCWD treatment facilities could be expanded or a new facility constructed for dedicated treatment of the additional demand. An alternative source is DSPUD service from its Lake Angela water supply. If this source is used, a new treatment plant and delivery lines may be necessary to be added at the southern edge of Lake Angela, next to the existing DSPUD plant. Also, one or more water storage reservoirs could be built within the northwest part of the Plan Area. Lake Van Norden could also serve as a water storage location. This alternative would involve reconstruction of a water supply reservoir at Lake Van Norden by building a new dam structure. Use of new groundwater wells, situated either within or outside the Plan Area, is also an alternative.

iv) Storm Drains. A storm drain system is proposed that will include roadside gutters, off-road ditches, drop inlets, culvert pipes, rock flow dissipaters, as well as extensive use of Low Impact Development (LID) features such as large and small vegetated swales, rock filled infiltration trenches, rock-lined ditches, detention basins and water quality sediment and retention basins.

v) Other. Gas service would be provided by propane tanks serving Plan Area improvements. The development will also include maintenance facilities on site, or as an alternative, on the east off site lands, and employee housing units as required by County ordinances.

1.8 Initial Phase Implementing Projects. It is contemplated that the first phase of the development of the Plan Area will consist of development in Lake Camp of a total of 294 lots, duplex cabins and residences, some of which may be sold in fractional interests. A summary of the number of each type of unit and homesite included in Phase 1 is shown in attached Figure 1.8.1. A conceptual depiction of the Phase 1 developed area in Lake Camp is shown in Figure 1.8.2.

Phase 1 will include completion of Lake House, an approximately 12,000 square foot private community center building and adjacent all season recreational amenities including fire pit, swimming pools and sports courts, located on the east side of West Lake. Additional amenities in Phase 1 include a warming cabin to support cross country ski activity, the completion of both East Lake and West Lake, cross country, bike and hiking trails and related trail heads, and parking lots of between 50-70 spaces, and may include a horse barn, stables and pasture. Phase 1 also includes maintenance facilities and related infrastructure. The infrastructure improvements

to be completed as part of Phase 1 include large power line under grounding, completion of the road system as shown in Figure 1.8.2 and extension into the Plan Area of existing available off-site sewer, water and power service sources, expanded or supplemented if necessary, adequate to serve Phase 1 uses.

Placer County entitlements required for Phase 1 include tentative and final subdivision maps for the homesites, duplex cabins and fractional residence units. Conditional use permits and variances may be required for certain uses within the Phase 1 improvements.

1.9 Project Approvals. Entitlements will be required from Placer County to approve and implement the Plan by the land uses and development described and illustrated throughout this Project Description. Those approvals include the following:

a) Certification by the Placer County Board of Supervisors ("Board") of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) adequate to meet all requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act for the Plan and the vesting tentative maps, conditional use permits and any other discretionary permits necessary for the first phase implementing projects.

b) Approval by the Board of amendments to the General Plan. The Plan is required to be consistent with the Placer County General Plan. Amendments are proposed to ensure consistency. The amendments are intended to provide the Specific Plan necessary flexibility to permit the best, environmentally sound design of development of this unique area. Amendment of the General Plan land use plan is proposed to allow for SPL zoning.

c) Approval by the Board of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to re-zone the site to "Specific Plan" (SPL). The SPL zone would be combined with the Plan to function as the zoning text and map for the site. Land use districts will be identified for each part of the site in the Plan.

d) Adoption by the Board of the Plan, including Development Standards and Design Guidelines to apply to all implementing projects under the Plan.

e) Approval by the Board of a large lot tentative map for portions of the Plan Area not within the first phase vesting tentative map area, to establish boundaries between different land use categories and establish parcels to be subject of future vesting tentative maps as provided for in the development agreement

f) Approval by the Board of a vesting tentative map, conditional use permit and any other discretionary Placer County permit necessary to implement projects in the first phase of the Plan.

g) Approval by the Board of a development agreement to set forth the obligations of the property owner and Placer County related to infrastructure completion and future Plan-implementing projects.

Subsequent approvals from Placer County would include the issuance of building and grading permits, and improvement plans subject to conditions placed on project approval, as well as approval of final maps.

In addition to the approvals from Placer County, development of the projects implementing the Plan would require entitlements, approvals and permits from other local, state and federal agencies, including the following:

h) California Regional Water Quality Control Board ("RWQCB") Waste Discharge Requirements and § 401 Clean Water Act water quality certification, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits; approval of an exception request for discharges in the 100-year floodplain (if required); and review of a Storm-Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

i) California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection ("CDF") approval of an amendment to an existing Timber Harvest Plan ("THP") or approval of a new THP to allow tree removal in the Plan Area. CDF approval of a Timberland Conversion Permit (TCP) for timberlands proposed to be converted to alternative uses.

j) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers §404 Clean Water Act nationwide or individual permits for any potential impacts on waters of the U. S.

k) California Department of Fish and Game may require a §1603 Streambed Alteration Permit and/or a Section 2081 permit for the implementing projects.

l) California State Water Resources Control Board General Construction Activity Storm Water Discharge Permit may be required prior to construction. May require a Water and Wastewater Service District Plan approval.

m) Placer County Division of Environmental Health may require permits for transportation and storage of hazardous materials. Such activities must also be in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

n) Placer County LAFCO approval of annexation into the DSPUD and/or the SLCWD, if required, and possibly service contracts and pipeline extension agreement with DSPUD and/or SLCWD to provide all necessary facilities to supply domestic and fire protection water and wastewater treatment/sewer service to the Plan Area.

o) U.S. Forest Service Special Use Permit for road access.

p) U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Section 7 consultation.

q) Federal Emergency Management Agency may require a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR).

r) Californian Public Utilities commission approval of modifications of the grade crossing of the UPRR right of way.

Figure 1.8.1

Phase 1 Information

LAKE CAMP- Phase 1

<i>Product</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Residences (1800-2600SF)	44
Cabins Duplex (1600-2400SF)	52
1/4 Acre Homesites	71
1/2 Acre Homesites	77
1 Acre Homesites	36
2 Acre Homesites	6
3+ Acre Forest Homesites	8
Lake Camp Subtotal:	294

LAKE CAMP- Phase 1

<i>Amenity</i>	<i>SF</i>
Lake House	12,000
Horse Barn & Pasture	10,000
Yurt/Fire Pit	1,200
Warming Cabin	500
Maintenance Yard (2.5 ac) & Facility	10,000
Swimming Pools & Sports Courts	
East Lake & West Lake	
X-Country/Bike/Hike Trails/Trailhead	
Parking Lots (50-70 spaces)	
Powerline Undergrounding	
Lake Camp Subtotal:	33,700